DC COMICS™
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HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™
KEITH GIFFEN
POP MHAN
Despara's Origin Revealed!
DCCOMICS.COM
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ETERNIA
CASTLE GRAYSKULL
IT IS THE FONT FROM WHICH ALL MAGICKS FLOW, THE ESSENCE OF ETERNIA AND, BY EXTENSION, THE ESSENCE OF THIS UNIVERSE.
AS THE FONT IS CORE TO ETERNIA, SO IS ETERNIA CORE TO THE UNIVERSE.
YAWN AGAIN AND I WILL HAVE YOUR MOUTH STITCHED SHUT.
ONE THOUSAND YEARS AGO LORD HORDAK PIERCED THE VEIL THAT FORBID THE FONT FROM ANY WHO WERE NOT OF ETERNIA BY BLOOD. ETERNIA WAS OVERRUN BY THE HORDE. THE FONT WAS LORD HORDAK'S TO CONSUME.

ONCE UPON A TIME

AND THAT... THAT WOULD END THE TALE WERE IT NOT FOR THE FORGE AND THRICE DAMNED GRAYSKULL AND THE CURSED SWORD HE WROUGHT TO CHANNEL THE POWER OF THE FONT.

THUS DID THE GREAT FAILING COME TO BE. THE LORD HORDAK WAS STRUCK DOWN BY THE POWER OF THE SWORD, GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED AND BANISHED TO BLEAK DESPONDOS WHERE HIS PHYSICAL FORM WITHERED AND DIED...

... WHERE HIS SPIRIT FORM, CLOAKED IN HATRED AND BILE, PURGED DESPONDOS OF ALL HOPE AND SAW IT RECAST IN HIS IMAGE. DESPONDOS AND HORDAK BECAME AS ONE.

ETHERIA, ETERNIA'S DARK MIRROR, BECAME HOME, ITS PEOPLE CAME TO KNOW HORDAK AS LORD.

THUS WAS I BORN TO POWER! THUS WAS I BORN TO SHARE LORD HORDAK'S CRAVING FOR VENGEANCE! **NOW** DO YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND!?

KEITH GIFFEN - SCRIPT
POP MHAN - ART
KATHRYN LAYNO - COLORS
DERON BENNETT - LETTERS
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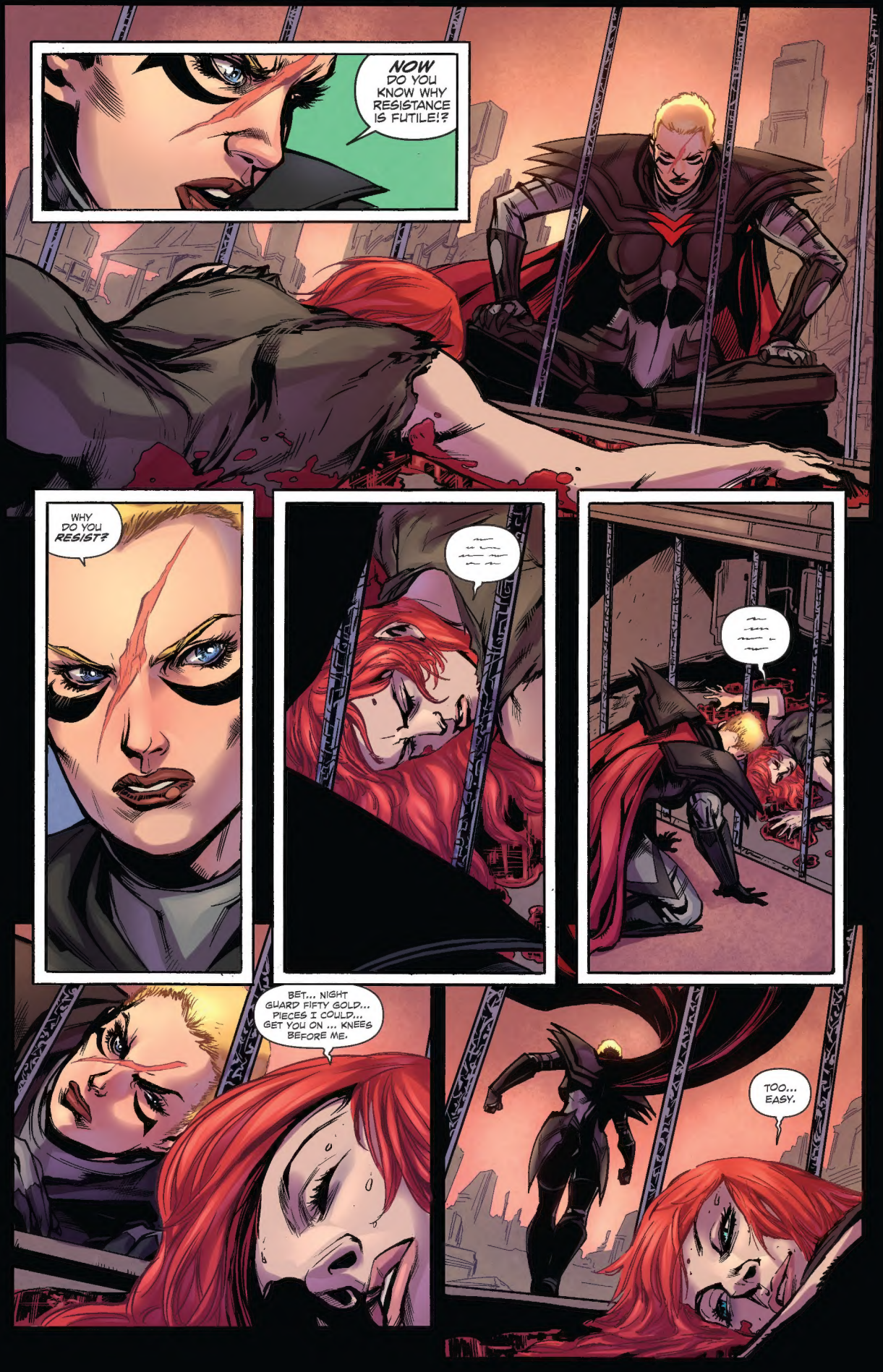
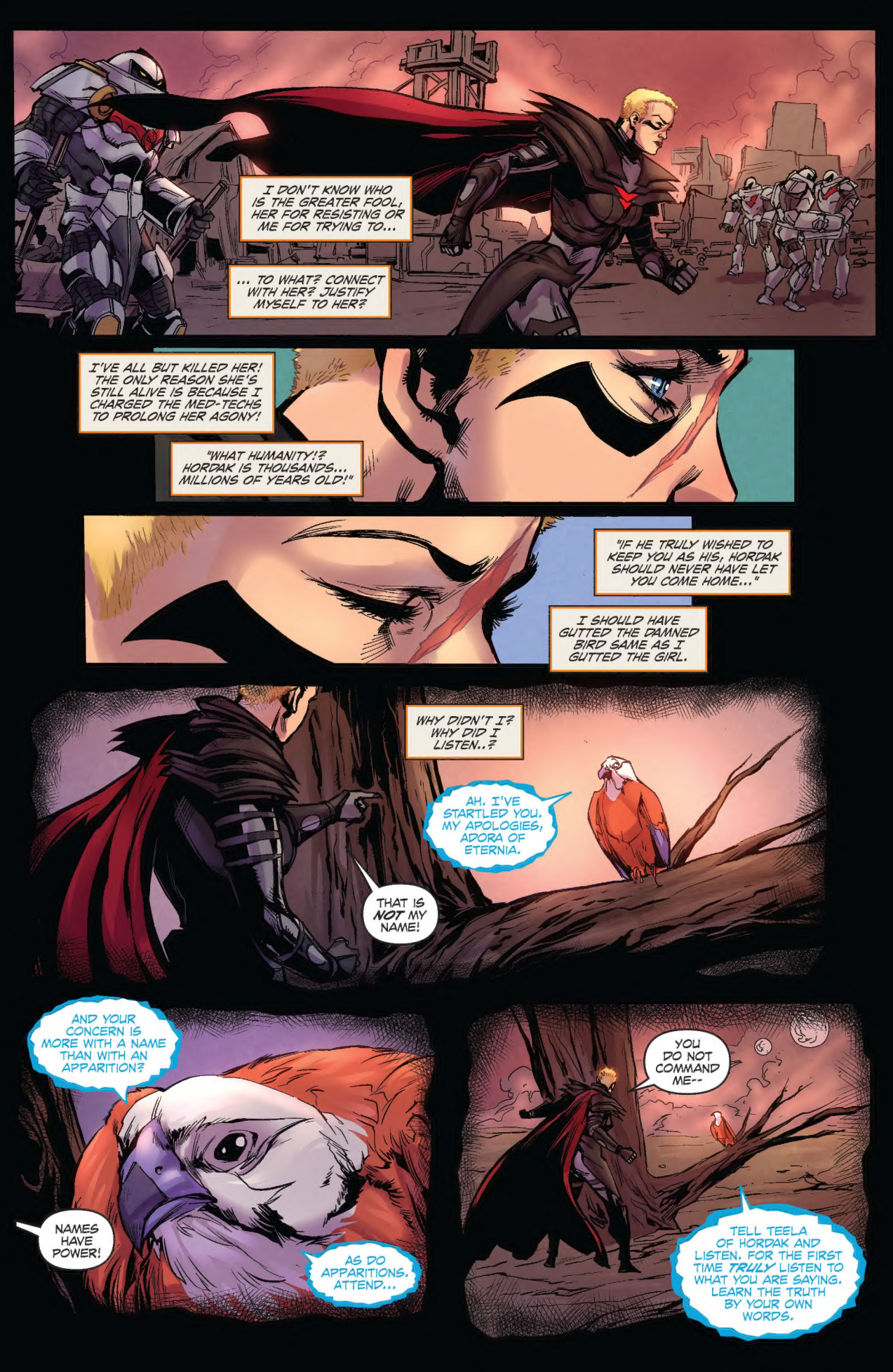
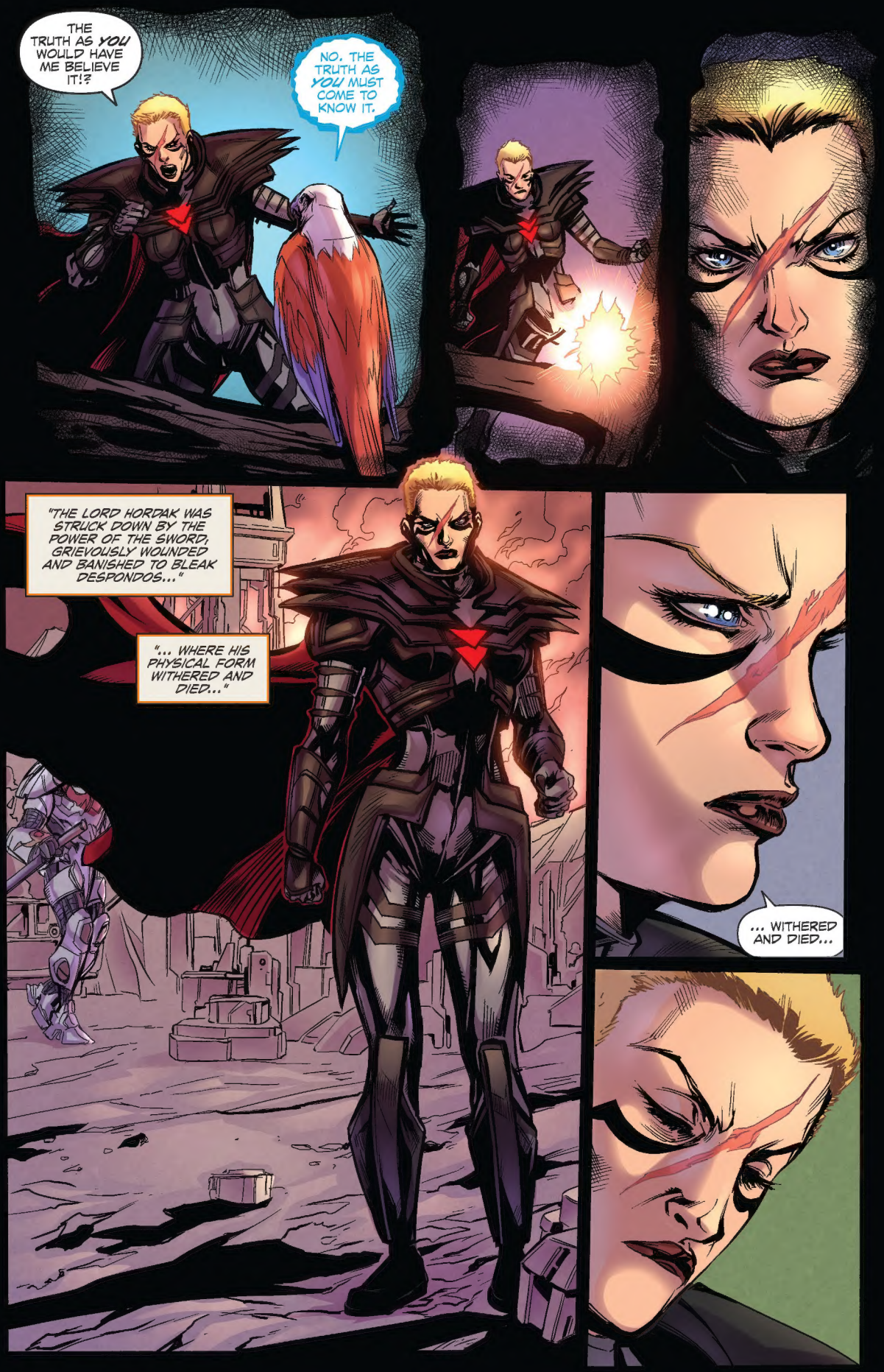
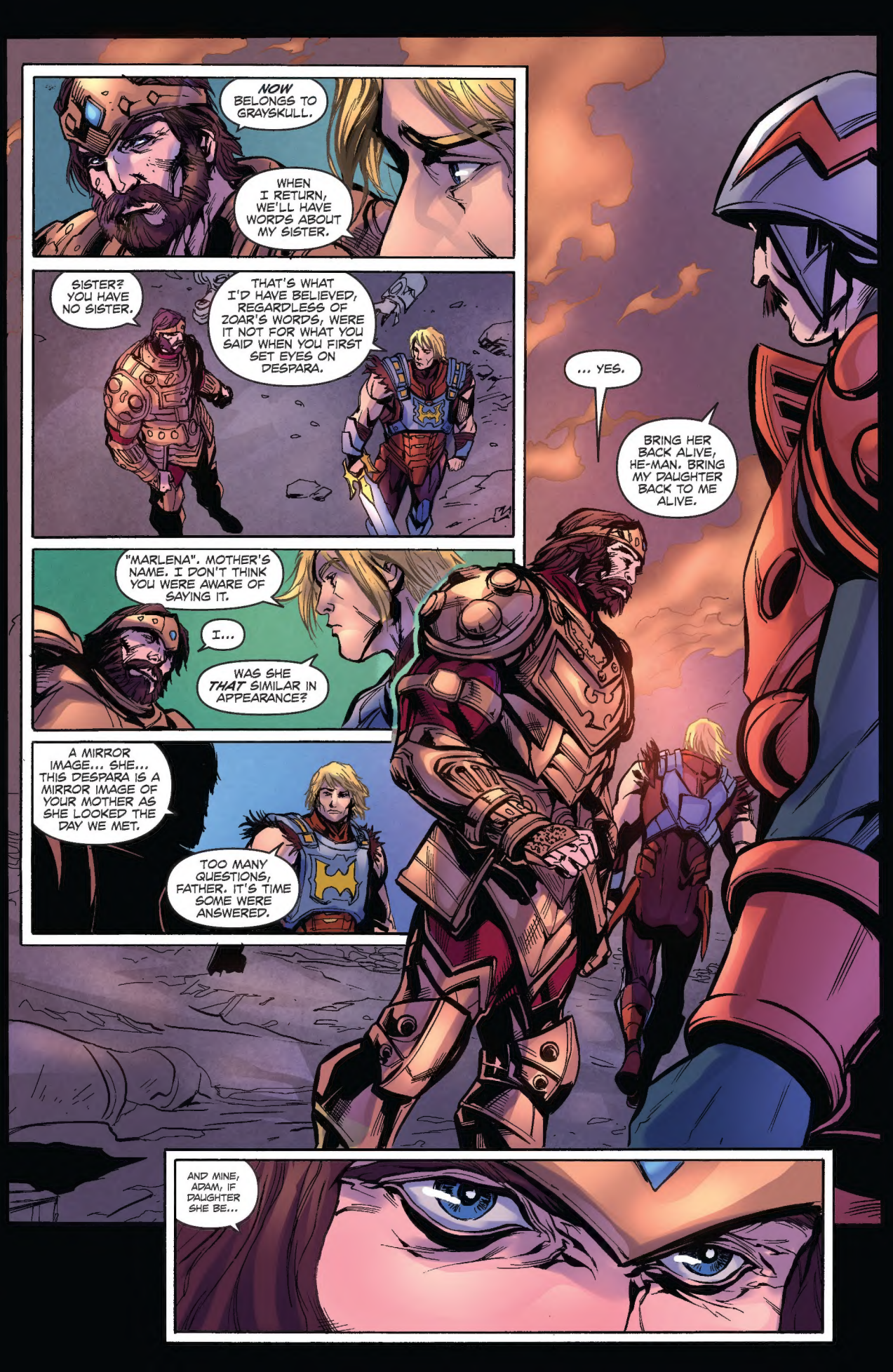

NOW DO YOU KNOW WHY RESISTANCE IS FUTILE!?
WHY DO YOU RESIST?
BET... NIGHT GUARD FIFTY GOLD... PIECES I COULD... GET YOU ON ... KNEES BEFORE ME.
TOO... EASY.

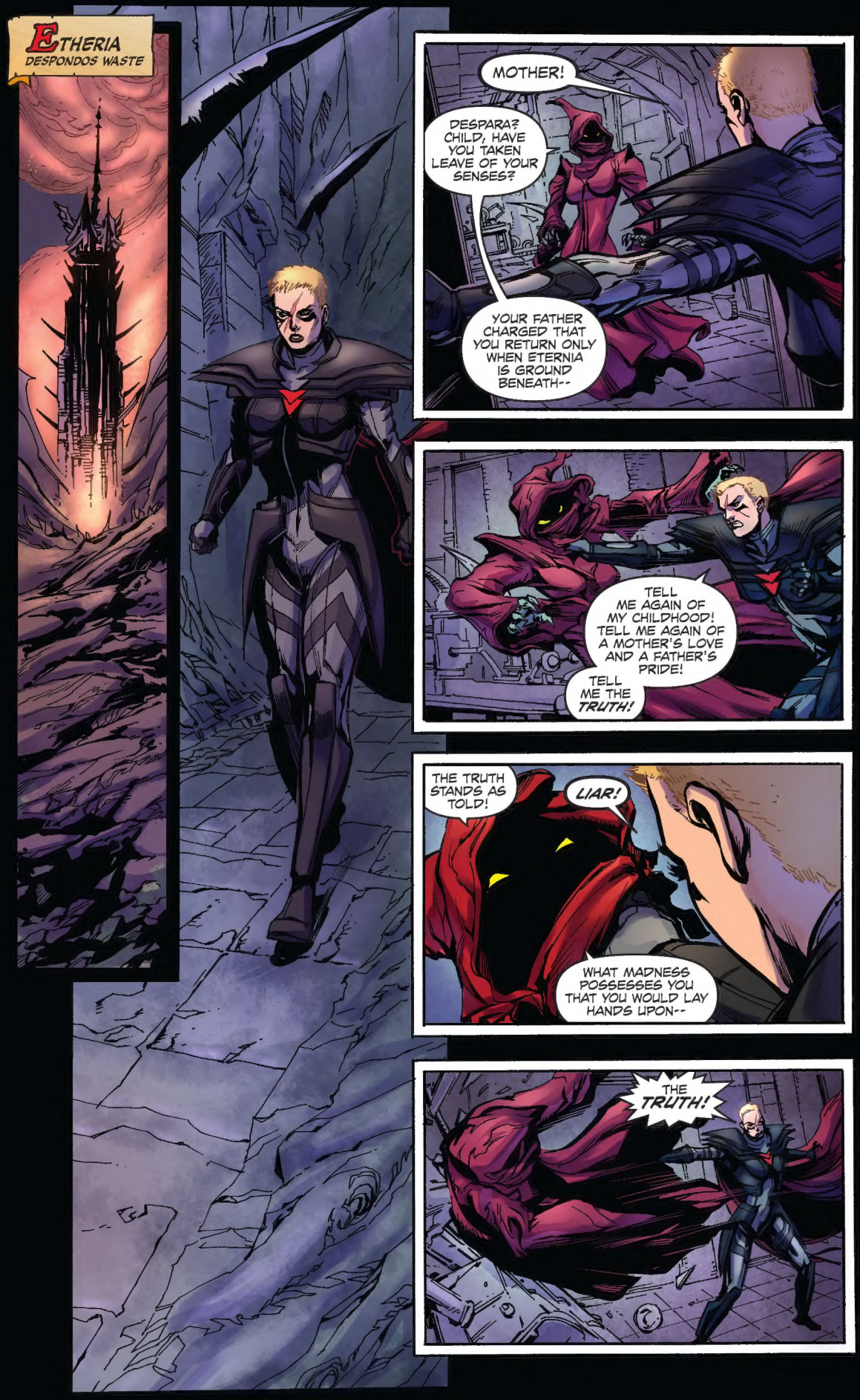

I DON'T KNOW WHO IS THE GREATER FOOL, HER FOR RESISTING OR ME FOR TRYING TO...
... TO WHAT? CONNECT WITH HER? JUSTIFY MYSELF TO HER?
I'VE ALL BUT KILLED HER! THE ONLY REASON SHE'S STILL ALIVE IS BECAUSE I CHARGED THE MED-TECHS TO PROLONG HER AGONY!
"WHAT HUMANITY!? HORDAK IS THOUSANDS... MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD!"
"IF HE TRULY WISHED TO KEEP YOU AS HIS, HORDAK SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET YOU COME HOME..."
I SHOULD HAVE GUTTED THE DAMNED BIRD SAME AS I GUTTED THE GIRL.
WHY DIDN'T I? WHY DID I LISTEN..?
AH. I'VE STARTLED YOU, MY APOLOGIES, ADORA OF ETERNIA.
THAT IS NOT MY NAME!
AND YOUR CONCERN IS MORE WITH A NAME THAN WITH AN APPARITION?
NAMES HAVE POWER!
AS DO APPARITIONS. ATTEND...
YOU DO NOT COMMAND ME--
TELL TEELA OF HORDAK AND LISTEN. FOR THE FIRST TIME TRULY LISTEN TO WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. LEARN THE TRUTH BY YOUR OWN WORDS.


THE TRUTH AS YOU WOULD HAVE ME BELIEVE IT!?
NO. THE TRUTH AS YOU MUST COME TO KNOW IT.
"THE LORD HORDAK WAS STRUCK DOWN BY THE POWER OF THE SWORD, GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED AND BANISHED TO BLEAK DESPONDOS..."
"... WHERE HIS PHYSICAL FORM WITHERED AND DIED..."
... WITHERED AND DIED...

I'D ASK WHERE YOU GOT OFF TO, BUT THE NEW ARMOR'S ANSWER ENOUGH.
IT'S A LONG STORY.
DOES IT INVOLVE RESCUING TEELA?
DO YOU EVEN HAVE TO ASK?

THEY'RE PULLING BACK! WE'VE ROUTED THEM!
WHY WOULD THEY FALL BACK? THEIR MOMENTUM WOULD HAVE CARRIED THEM THROUGH FIRST AND SECOND PERIMETERS.
TRY NOT TO SOUND SO DISAPPOINTED. NOT ALL OF US GOT NEW ARMOR.
NOT DISAPPOINTED. SUSPICIOUS. THAT DESPARA'S NOT ONE TO WALK AWAY WHEN THERE'S STILL BLOOD TO BE SPILT.
A STRATEGIC RETREAT?
YOU ASKING ME OR TELLING ME?
THE FORGE! YOU FOUND--
FORGE?
GRAYSKULL'S FORGE. IT'S PART OF THAT LONG STORY I MENTIONED.
HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THE FORGE'S WHEREABOUTS... ITS EXISTENCE?
ZOAR.
SORCERESS? BUT... SHE IS DEAD.
DO MAGES EVER TRULY DIE?
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE COMFORTED OR DISTURBED BY THAT.
A NEW SWORD AS WELL. YOU HAVE BEEN BUSY.
TIME ENOUGH FOR TALK LATER.
NOW BELONGS TO TEELA.


NOW BELONGS TO GRAYSKULL.
WHEN I RETURN, WE'LL HAVE WORDS ABOUT MY SISTER.
SISTER? YOU HAVE NO SISTER.
THAT'S WHAT I'D HAVE BELIEVED, REGARDLESS OF ZOAR'S WORDS, WERE IT NOT FOR WHAT YOU SAID WHEN YOU FIRST SET EYES ON DESPARA.
... YES.
BRING HER BACK ALIVE, HE-MAN. BRING MY DAUGHTER BACK TO ME ALIVE.
"MARLENA". MOTHER'S NAME. I DON'T THINK YOU WERE AWARE OF SAYING IT.
I...
WAS SHE THAT SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE?
A MIRROR IMAGE... SHE... THIS DESPARA IS A MIRROR IMAGE OF YOUR MOTHER AS SHE LOOKED THE DAY WE MET.
TOO MANY QUESTIONS, FATHER. IT'S TIME SOME WERE ANSWERED.
AND MINE, ADAM, IF DAUGHTER SHE BE...


ETHERIA
DESPONDOS WASTE
MOTHER!
DESPARA? CHILD, HAVE YOU TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES?
YOUR FATHER CHARGED THAT YOU RETURN ONLY WHEN ETERNIA IS GROUND BENEATH--
TELL ME AGAIN OF MY CHILDHOOD! TELL ME AGAIN OF A MOTHER'S LOVE AND A FATHER'S PRIDE!
TELL ME THE TRUTH!
THE TRUTH STANDS AS TOLD!
LIAR!
WHAT MADNESS POSSESSES YOU THAT YOU WOULD LAY HANDS UPON--
THE TRUTH!

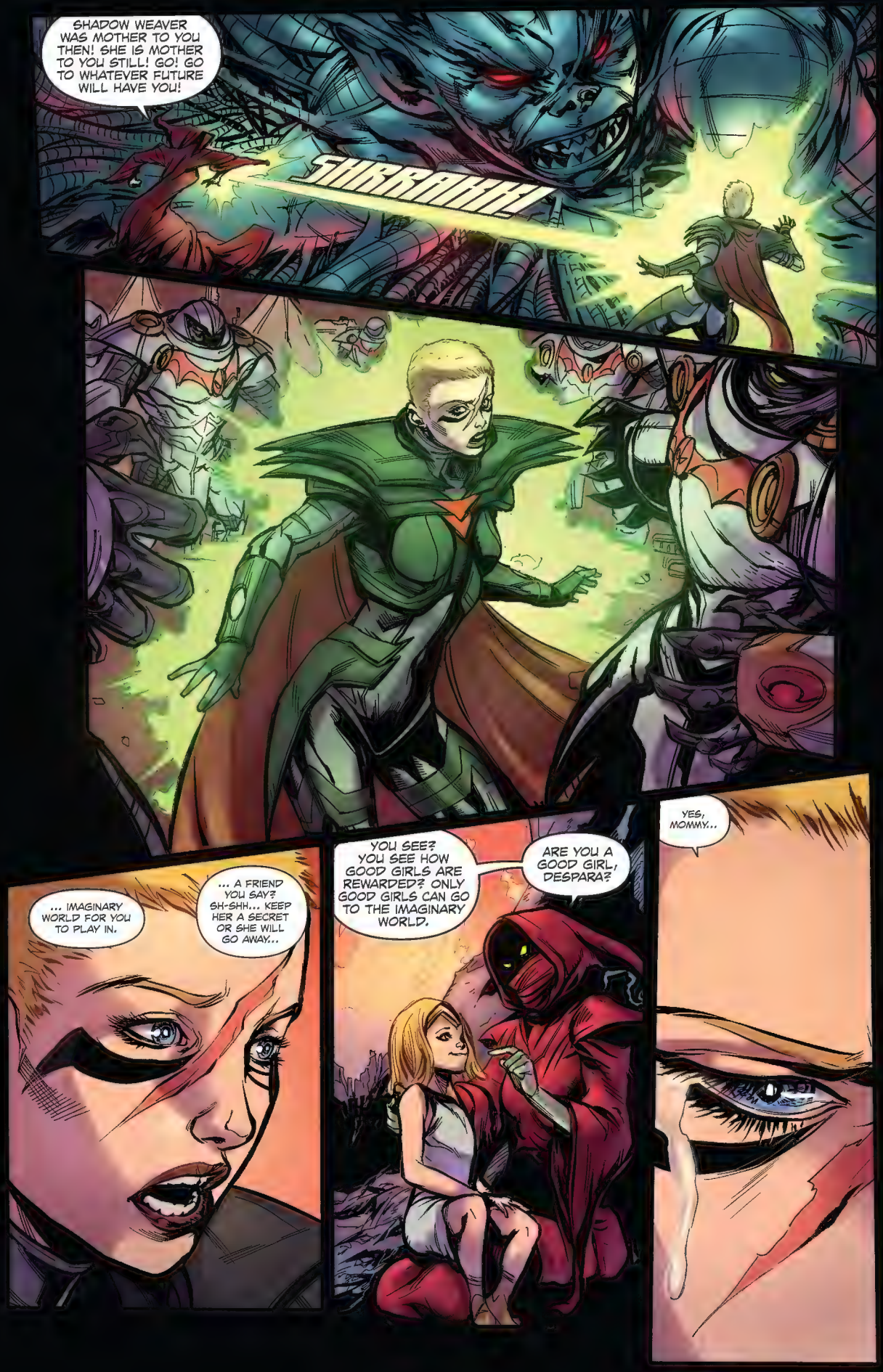
TOO SOON, CHILD. YOUR SUSPICIONS COME TOO SOON.
ONCE YOU HAD GROUND ETERNIA UNDERFOOT, KILLED YOUR OWN KIN, THEN WHAT WOULD IT MATTER IF THE TRUTH WERE KNOWN?
WHERE COULD YOU HAVE GONE? WHO COULD YOU HAVE TURNED TO?
WHO BUT SHADOW WEAVER WOULD HAVE CARED?
KIN?
BROTHER AND FATHER, NOT THAT THEY KNOW THE TRUTH ANY MORE THAN YOU.
ALTHOUGH IT WOULD SURPRISE ME WERE THE FATHER NOT TO SUSPECT. YOU ARE NEAR ENOUGH TO YOUR MOTHER TO BE HER TWIN.
AND I LOOK *NOTHING* LIKE YOU.
YOU LOVED ME AS A MOTHER. YOU STILL CAN.
YOU SURPRISE ME. I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D CLING TO THE LIE.
WHY!? TO WHAT END!? WHEN HE SENT YOU TO ETERNIA HE TOOK YOU FROM ME! HE *KNEW* THE TRUTH AWAITED YOU!
HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD COME TO YOU AFTER SO SHORT A TIME.
HIS ARROGANCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS UNDOING.
WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW, CHILD?
WHO AM I?
HAD YOU NOT BEEN TAKEN, ADORA OF ETERNIA. *PRINCESS* ADORA, IF SUCH AS THAT MEANS SOMETHING TO YOU.
PRINCESS...
THERE WAS NO THRONE WAITING FOR YOU!
THE THRONE WAS YOUR BROTHER'S TO CLAIM... YOUR *TWIN* BROTHER!
ETERNIA HAS LITTLE USE FOR QUEENS EXCEPT AS ORNAMENTS TO DANGLE FROM A KING'S ARM.

HE WAS CALLED KELDOR BEFORE HE SOLD WHAT LITTLE SOUL HE POSSESSED TO HORDAK. POWER, GIRL, NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE ALLURE OF POWER.
AS KELDOR HE WAS INSIGNIFICANT; AT BEST A FOOTNOTE IN ETERNIA'S HISTORY. AS SKELETOR, HOWEVER...
... HE WAS OF AWE AND WONDER AND DARK DESIRE. HE WAS ETERNIA'S HISTORY WRIT IN THE BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT. HE WAS...
... SPECTACULAR.
KNOW HIM AS UNCLE.
YOU WERE THE PRICE KELDOR PAID FOR HORDAK'S GRACE.
YOU AND THE MALE CHILD. ADAM.
THE VERY WARRIOR YOU HAVE SWORN TO SEE DEAD. THERE IS HUMOR IN THAT, IF ONE HAS AN EYE FOR IT.
MORE LIES, "MOTHER"?
I AM WELL PAST LYING--
THEN WHY WAS I TAKEN AND THE ADAM CHILD LEFT BEHIND!?
TEELA. THAT IS HER NAME, IS IT NOT; YOUR IMAGINARY FRIEND COME TO LIFE?
WHAT DOES TEELA HAVE TO DO WITH--
HER MOTHER. HER MOTHER SAW YOU SEPARATED FROM YOUR TWIN.
HAD SHE NOT INTERVENED, BOTH OF YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

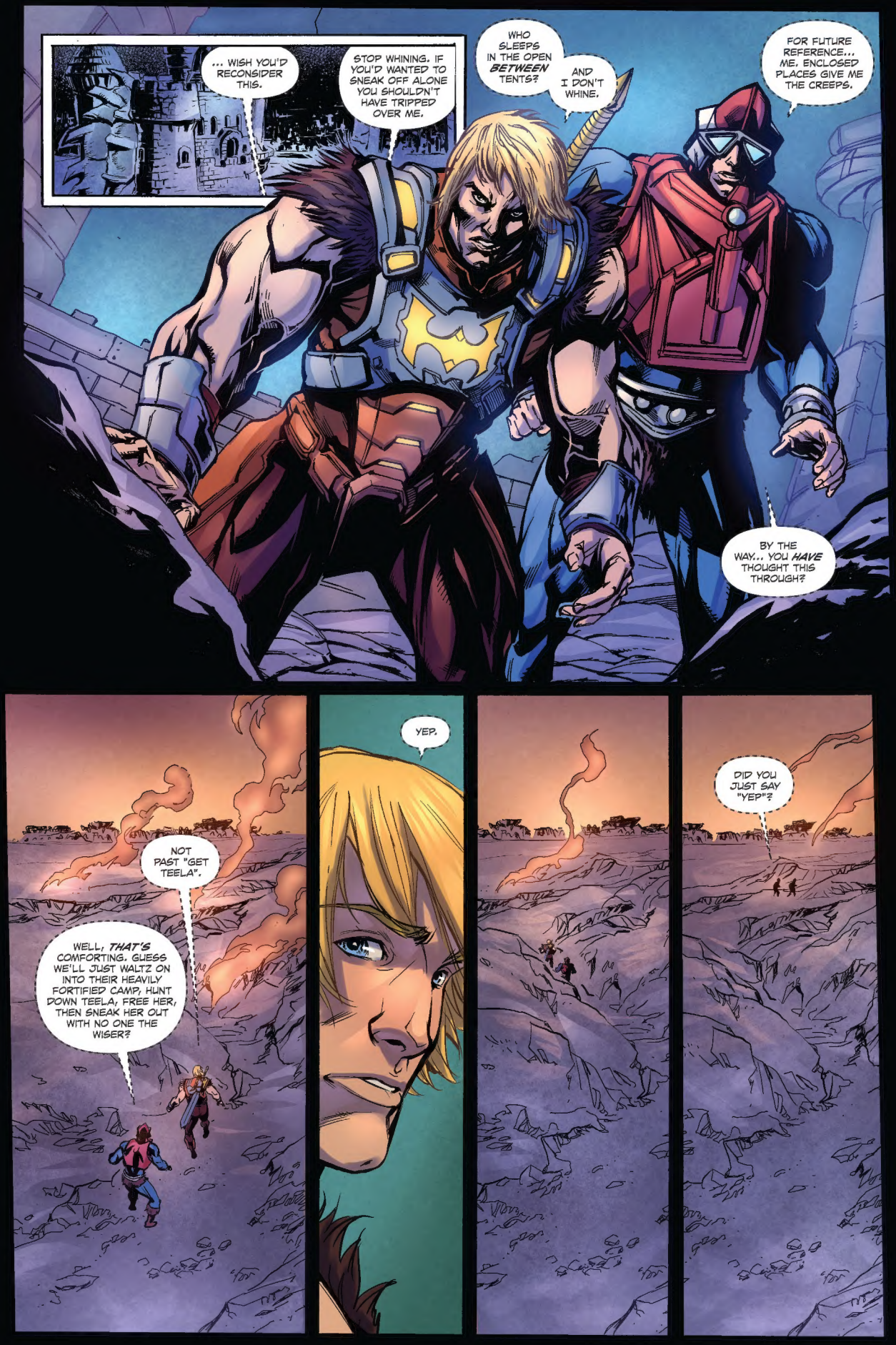
SHE WAS A SORCERESS OF GREAT POWER AND GREATER CUNNING.
YOUR EXPRESSION BETRAYS YOU.
IT ASKS THE QUESTION YOUR PRIDE WOULD NEVER VOICE: WHAT THREAT COULD TWO INNOCENT INFANTS POSSIBLY POSE TO HORDAK OF THE BLEAK DOMINION?
PROPHECY, CHILD. THE POWER OF GRAYSKULL. HORDAK BELIEVED YOU TO BE THE PROPHECY GIVEN LIFE.
SHE SUSPECTED THE ROYAL TWINS WOULD BE TARGETED BY HORDAK BECAUSE, WERE THEIR POSITIONS REVERSED, SHE WOULD HAVE TARGETED THEM.
... TO THE POWER GRAYSKULL'S MAGE WAS SWORN TO PROTECT.
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY BELIEF THAT, IN THE END, YOU WERE ALLOWED TO BE TAKEN.
THE BOY CHILD OR THE GIRL CHILD. IT MATTERED NOT TO HER. SHE SERVED GRAYSKULL AND GRAYSKULL IS NOTHING IF NOT A HARSH MASTER. THE PROPHECY WAS ALL.
YOU WERE THE SACRIFICE GRAYSKULL REQUIRED. PROPHECY IS OF BLOOD, CHILD. THERE IS ALWAYS A PRICE TO PAY.

THE SORCERESS CEDED YOU TO SAVE YOUR TWIN.
HAD THE COMBAT CONTINUED, ONE OR BOTH OF YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN KILLED.
THE PROPHECY WAS ALL!
TELL ME SHE LIES, LORD...
DOES THE WEAPON QUESTION THE WIELDER!?
YOU PETITIONED FOR THE TRUTH AND THIS WRETCHED WENCH WAS FOOL ENOUGH TO GRANT YOUR PETITION!
WHO ARE YOU TO QUESTION THE WILL OF HORDAK!?

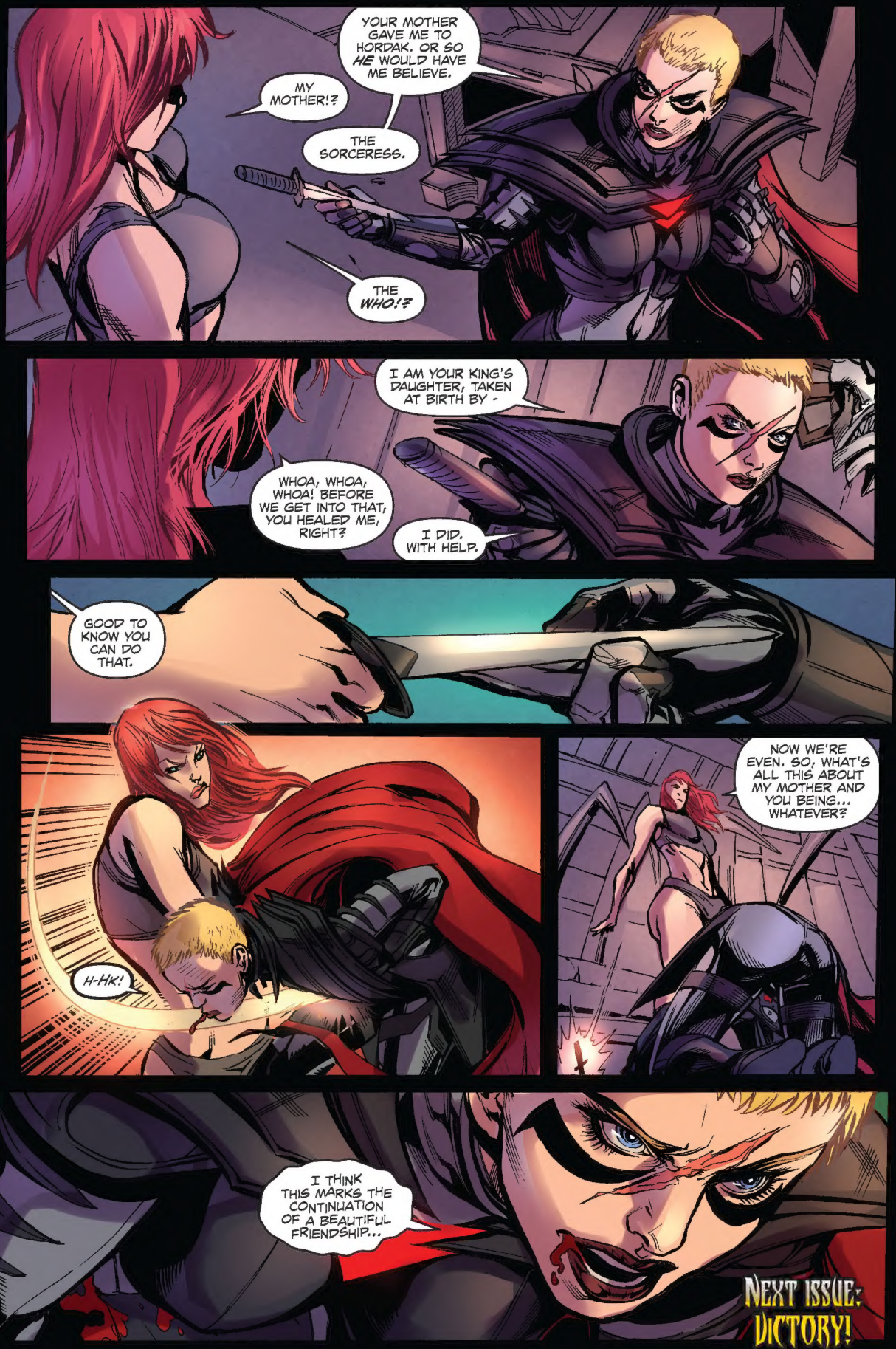
I CANNOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION! WHO AM I!? IS MY ENTIRE LIFE A LIE!?
YES, THRALL. YOUR LIFE WAS LIVED AS I DECREED IT! YOU... YOUR VERY SOUL WAS RECAST IN MY IMAGE!
TELL ME, THRALL... WERE YOUR CHILD TAKEN FROM YOU, WOULD YOU NOT MOVE THE HEAVENS ABOVE AND THE EARTH BELOW TO GET THE CHILD BACK?
NO.
YOU DARE!
THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME EXCEPT AS A SACRIFICE WILLINGLY MADE AND ALL TOO SOON FORGOTTEN!
NOT SO! NOT SO!
SORCERESS KNEW! SHE KNEW THE KING WOULD NEVER STOP TRYING TO GET THE CHILD BACK! RUSH TO WAR THEY WOULD AND UNPREPARED WOULD THEY BE!
SORCERESS MADE THEM FORGET! FOR ETERNIA!
FOR CURSED GRAYSKULL!


SHADOW WEAVER WAS MOTHER TO YOU THEN! SHE IS MOTHER TO YOU STILL! GO! GO TO WHATEVER FUTURE WILL HAVE YOU!
SHRRAHH!
... A FRIEND YOU SAY? SH-SHH... KEEP HER A SECRET OR SHE WILL GO AWAY...
... IMAGINARY WORLD FOR YOU TO PLAY IN.
ARE YOU A GOOD GIRL, DESPARA?
YOU SEE? YOU SEE HOW GOOD GIRLS ARE REWARDED? ONLY GOOD GIRLS CAN GO TO THE IMAGINARY WORLD.
YES, MOMMY..

TEELA!
GHKKK...
LOOK AND LEARN. DO NOT DISAPPOINT ME... "DAUGHTER".


... WISH YOU'D RECONSIDER THIS.
STOP WHINING. IF YOU'D WANTED TO SNEAK OFF ALONE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIPPED OVER ME.
WHO SLEEPS IN THE OPEN *BETWEEN* TENTS?
AND I DON'T WHINE.
FOR FUTURE REFERENCE... ME. ENCLOSED PLACES GIVE ME THE CREEPS.
BY THE WAY... YOU *HAVE* THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?
NOT PAST "GET TEELA".
WELL, *THAT'S* COMFORTING. GUESS WE'LL JUST WALTZ ON INTO THEIR HEAVILY FORTIFIED CAMP, HUNT DOWN TEELA, FREE HER, THEN SNEAK HER OUT WITH NO ONE THE WISER?
YEP.
DID YOU JUST SAY "YEP"?

NGHH... WH..?
YOU!
THWOK!
THIS IS MORE EFFECTIVE.
WHAT!?


YOUR MOTHER GAVE ME TO HORDAK. OR SO HE WOULD HAVE ME BELIEVE.
MY MOTHER!?
THE SORCERESS.
THE WHO!?
I AM YOUR KING'S DAUGHTER, TAKEN AT BIRTH BY -
WHOA, WHOA, WHOA! BEFORE WE GET INTO THAT, YOU HEALED ME, RIGHT?
I DID. WITH HELP.
GOOD TO KNOW YOU CAN DO THAT.
H-HK!
NOW WE'RE EVEN. SO, WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT MY MOTHER AND YOU BEING... WHATEVER?
I THINK THIS MARKS THE CONTINUATION OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP...
NEXT ISSUE: DICTORY!